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NEWS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, Washington, D. C.

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TEAM APPROACH TO NUTRITION EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

MARY M. HILL, Ed.D., NUTRITIONIST, INSTITUTE OF HOME ECONOMICS

A team approach to educational programs promoting good health through good nutrition is a promising one. Some of our readers have expressed an interest in learning how nutritionists and related workers have cooperated with educators in helping children and their parents achieve good nutrition by developing nutrition education programs in schools.

In this issue of NCN we describe a workshop initiated by an industry-sponsored health education organization, at which key school personnel and community nutrition workers (1) considered the problem of helping school children achieve or maintain good health through wise food selection, (2) exchanged ideas on suitable activities and materials, and (3) reported progress and discussed possibilities for continued cooperation at a followup session 7 months later.

NUTRITION EDUCATION WORKSHOP Planned Cooperatively

Nutritionists and related workers in community groups of the Boston area have, from time to time, given consultant help or direct service to schools. These workers could see great advantage in meeting with key school personnel to consider what needed to be done and how it could best be accomplished. Such a conference would, they believed, promote mutual understanding and assistance, prevent duplication of services, and provide an opportunity to develop guidelines for school programs consistent with our best knowledge of nutrition and of educational approaches.

The New England Dairy and Food Council took the initiative in making arrangements for the meetings, provided the necessary funds, and served as hosts to the participants. The workshop was sponsored, however, by several agencies—the nutrition section of the Massachusetts Health Department, the State Extension Service, and the Massachusetts Department of Education.

The workshop was planned by nutritionists from the sponsoring agencies, the office of the State Supervisor of

School Lunch, and the New England Dairy and Food Council; and by the senior supervisor of elementary education from the State Department of Education.

A questionnaire was sent to participating school personnel to learn what kind of help they felt was needed. The responses were used in planning the workshop, which was held in Boston in October 1960. A followup session was held in May 1961, to report progress and to discuss future activities.

Participants

Invitations were sent to teachers, elementary school supervisors, principals, school nurses, home economics teachers, and PTA members in several communities.

Representatives from the sponsoring agencies were invited to report on the kind of help they had already given to schools and the kind and amount of assistance they could give to school programs.

A nutritionist from Nutrition Programs Service, Institute of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture was invited to report on nutrition education research in schools and to indicate how the findings of this research could be used as guidelines for developing programs.

First Session

On Friday evening, October 14, 1960, at 7 p.m., participants from 10 school systems and the sponsoring agencies met for dessert-coffee and a "get-acquainted" period.

The workshop was opened with a presentation of questions taken from the responses to the questionnaire. Questions were posed, in the following order, by a teacher, an elementary school supervisor, a school nurse, a parent, and the senior supervisor of elementary education, Massachusetts Department of Education:

1. What are the responsibilities of teachers to help children meet their nutritional needs?
2. How can we add anything to curriculums that are already crowded and to time schedules already "tight"?
3. What can we do for children who come to school with little or no breakfast and how can we help parents to encourage children to eat a morning meal?

4. How can we coordinate the teaching in the homes with the teaching in the school?

5. If the development of good food habits is to be encouraged in the classroom, what assistance is there for our teachers?

Our knowledge of nutrition education.—The nutritionist from the U. S. Department of Agriculture reviewed highlights of research on food consumption and food habits of U. S. citizens, as well as the educational research which has provided direction for planning nutrition education programs. She concluded that:

1. As educators in a free society, we are obligated—in fact we are committed—to help each of the 44 million or more children in our schools become as creative and productive as his capacities will allow.

2. Health does influence effectiveness, and good nutrition is essential to good health. Yet far too many children have either not attained or have failed to maintain a desirable level of health.

3. We live in a land where food is abundant and the necessary variety of food is available to most individuals.

4. Education is necessary to help individuals learn to choose and to eat a combination of foods that will constitute an adequate diet.

5. We know how to plan and conduct nutrition education programs that have demonstrated a good potential for success. Surveys show, however, only a few such programs in our schools.

6. The hope of the future lies in the children—every last one of them. Their ability to cope with the problems of a new age will depend on how well we discharge our educational responsibility.

In essence, we know what to do. We know how to go about it. We could be doing it. Today is not too soon to begin.

What community agencies have done in Massachusetts.—Nutritionists in community agencies contributed to school programs by assisting with food habit surveys upon which nutrition education programs were built.

1. Agawam: A nutritionist from the Massachusetts Department of Health reported a cooperative study on eating habits of schoolchildren in Agawam. A survey of 1-day food records of 2,191 children in grades 4 to 12 was made in November 1959. Students in biology classes and members of the PTA and the local Lioness Club assisted in collecting and tabulating food records. Consultant help was provided by the health department nutritionist.

Records were evaluated, summarized, and interpreted by Massachusetts Department of Health nutritionists.

In general, they found that these children needed more green and yellow vegetables, more citrus fruits or other vitamin C foods, and more milk and other sources

of high-quality protein, if they were to get the recommended daily allowances of nutrients.

Breakfast was also an area of concern. For example, 10 percent of the children came to school without any morning meal. The survey showed, however, that the habit of omitting breakfast appeared at the sixth grade level and became increasingly worse with the years. Breakfast was skipped by 14 percent of the high school boys and 26 percent of the high school girls. These results are similar to those found among schoolchildren throughout the nation.

The following recommendations were made to the schools to improve the nutritional status of Agawam children:

The school lunch could include a dark-green or yellow vegetable several times each week. Some citrus fruit or other vitamin C-rich food should be included daily in the lunch menus. The nutrient content of casseroles, cream sauces, and desserts could be increased by the addition of nonfat dry milk solids. Additional eggs, cheese, and peanut butter could be used frequently to help build the total protein content of children's diets toward the recommended daily allowances.

Classroom activities could be included which emphasize (1) the importance of eating a morning meal, (2) increasing the variety of foods children will eat, and (3) the place of school lunch in the daily diets of schoolchildren.

2. Martha's Vineyard: The Home Department of the Dukes County Extension Service cooperated with school personnel in conducting a nutrition education program for students of the regional high school in Martha's Vineyard.

Goals and planning procedures were established with the help of the State Extension specialist in foods and nutrition, other State Extension staff, University staff, the head of nutrition research at the Experiment Station, and a representative from the Department of Public Health.

A committee of lay leaders, parents of teenagers, and school personnel including the principal, lunchroom supervisor, and home economics teacher met to discuss the program.

A survey of eating habits was made in January 1960 to determine what needed to be included in the program. Food records taken from 248 students were evaluated and interpreted by the home economics agent and the nutritionist from the Extension Service.

The findings were similar to those reported in Agawam schools and in surveys of teenagers throughout the nation. These young people needed more milk, more green and yellow vegetables, and more citrus fruits or other sources of vitamin C. At least 73 percent of them were not eating $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of the daily recommended allowances

of nutrients in the morning. Of this group, 6 percent were omitting the morning meal altogether.

A leaflet was prepared which included the results of the survey, suggestions for dietary improvement, and a list of the necessary nutrients, along with some of the reasons why each should be included in the diet.

An assembly program was held to (1) report the findings to the students, (2) distribute the leaflets, and (3) show two appropriate films.

The results and implications of the findings were discussed with school personnel to serve as guidelines in the school program. Appropriate teaching materials were also supplied.

After 1 year, students in art classes prepared a large bulletin board display based on the survey and the school program which followed. The display was a feature of the school "open house." Both parents and students showed their interest in the program by the comments they made and the questions they asked.

A mobile display entitled, "Eat Your Way to Better Living," was prepared, emphasizing desirable eating habits for all age groups. This exhibit was placed for 1 week in each of the six island libraries. Included were three reputable nutrition texts, USDA bulletins written specifically for various age groups, and copies of the survey report. The county extension agent in home economics spent as much time as possible in the library where the exhibit was on display to answer questions.

A resurvey is being considered to learn of any improvement in eating habits and to provide further direction for the school program.

The first session of the workshop was concluded with a discussion period to permit clarification of any points presented.

Second Session

Nutrition facts.—The second session on Saturday, October 15 was opened by one of the nutritionists from the New England Dairy and Food Council. She discussed the food needs of schoolchildren and how they could be met by choosing foods from four broad groups. She also called attention to materials and visuals suitable for school programs available to teachers from Federal, State, and local agencies as well as from the group she represents.

Special interest discussions.—Two discussion periods of 45 minutes each were devoted to four areas of special interest—visual aids, surveys, nutrition information, and initiating and conducting nutrition education programs in schools. Resource persons were available in each of the four areas to answer questions and to stimulate discussion of the special interest topic in terms of school situations.

Highlights of Discussions Summarized

After luncheon, the USDA nutritionist was called upon to enumerate some of the ideas that had come out of discussions as to what school personnel might do in their particular work situations. Her summary follows:

1. Ongoing, positive programs require that teachers have some background in nutrition in order to present sound information and to help children develop wholesome attitudes and establish or maintain desirable food practices.

2. Since nutrition is not a requirement for teacher certification in Massachusetts, sources of consultant help are necessary to interpret nutrition information and to help coordinate activities. Such help is available from nutritionists in State and local agencies both public and voluntary, from nutritionists in industry-sponsored groups, and in schools with professionally trained school lunch managers, home economics teachers, and nurses. Necessarily the amount of help these professional persons can give is limited because of their other major responsibilities.

3. Even when organized, ongoing programs are not operating in schools and consultant help is often difficult to obtain, teachers and other school personnel can contribute constructively to the promotion of good attitudes and desirable food practices among children. They can display a wholesome attitude towards all foods, and help children—particularly primary grade children—become familiar with and eat a wide variety of foods. The teaching and administrative staff can cooperate with the school lunch staff to achieve and maintain good school lunch participation. Whenever possible a good example can be set for children.

4. When organized activities are planned, it is well to work in kindergarten through grade three on developing a taste for a wide variety of foods and on identifying foods. (It is not necessary for these children to memorize or spell the various nutrients.) In grades four through six, emphasis can be on learning that food makes a difference in how we look, how we feel, and how well children grow. From grade seven on up, foods can be taken apart and nutrients, as such, studied.

5. Including nutrition in the curriculum need not require additional blocks of time. In proper context, nutrition is a part of any broad health program. Appropriate activities can be included along with other aspects of health in the time allocated to the health program. Further teaching can take place by emphasizing the nutritional aspects of activities in other areas of learning, such as science.

6. Communication with the home is essential. Parents seldom criticize work in the school when they understand that the teacher's goal is to supplement parents' efforts to teach children to eat enough of the right kinds of foods.

7. All effort on the part of the teacher to encourage good practices is worthwhile. It may simply be reading and discussing the school lunch menu every day with the children before lunch. This daily attention is helpful to the school lunch program and is probably more constructive than an elaborate unit of work that is not quite suited to the interest and maturity of the particular children involved.

The Workshop Adjourned

Attention was called to the fact that animals and consultant help in conducting animal feeding demonstrations were available from the New England Dairy and Food Council. Also available from the same source, on loan, were classroom kits of utensils and serving equipment for the preparation of food in the classroom.

The participants agreed to attend a followup meeting in the spring. At such a meeting activities would be reported and ideas exchanged for further work in the schools.

FOLLOWUP MEETING

On Tuesday, May 9, 1961, the group reconvened to report what had been done in schools, to exchange ideas, and to decide on future plans. Questionnaires were sent to the schools to learn the kinds of activities that had been used in teaching nutrition.

School personnel were invited to describe outstanding work at this followup meeting. Key people from communities not represented at the first meeting were also invited to attend, with the hope that they might be inspired to take ideas back to their schools.

Reports of Activities

A variety of activities were reported. For example, in one third grade, children learned to identify foods and to place them in the four food groups. Parents cooperated by serving at home the foods their children had studied in school. The group heard a tape recording of the children reporting their experiences.

The activity gave youngsters an opportunity to increase the variety of foods they would eat and provided an enriching experience in the language arts. The teaching was also projected into the homes.

A first grade teacher reported her work with snack foods in connection with her work on dental health. Over a period of several months, she and her class became acquainted with many different foods that are good to eat and make good snacks. One day the teacher provided a wedge of cheese for all the children. Later, members of the class took turns bringing a taste of other suitable snacks for the class to try.

A positive attitude toward the children's "dislikes"

proved helpful. Not every child acquired a taste for every unfamiliar food offered, but over the period every child did have an opportunity to increase the number of suitable snack foods he would eat. Most children did accept some new foods.

A school nurse reported her work with individual children in an elementary school. When she talked with a child, she had him make a list of the foods he had not yet learned to enjoy. Some produced lists that were very long and often included important foods such as milk, green and yellow vegetables, and citrus fruits.

The nurse would ask the child if he thought he could try to learn to enjoy one of the disliked-but-important foods by eating it occasionally. She offered to write him a personal reminder in 6 or 8 weeks if he would agree to answer her letter and tell her how he was getting on.

The nurse reported that youngsters were pleased to get mail addressed to them and the responses from the children were delightful and gratifying. More important was the reaction of parents who were happy to provide the food occasionally and take a permissive but encouraging attitude toward the youngster's efforts to help himself. Not all children responded but every one who did represented a small victory over poor practices.

A fifth grade teacher reported that his class was learning by use of a farm unit, that the kind and amount of food eaten makes a difference in the health and vigor of animals, including boys and girls. The children learned that different animals require different foods and if not fed enough of the needed foods, they did not look or feel well.

The class wrote a script about some children and Fido, their poor "droopy" dog who obviously did not feel well, and how Fido grew into a frisky, healthy animal when his masters learned what to feed him. The children did not wish to be like Fido and decided they would eat the vegetables and drink the milk they had been avoiding at home and in the school lunch.

The children made puppets in their art class to illustrate the script. The class shared the lesson in nutrition with other youngsters by presenting their puppet show at an assembly program.

A kindergarten teacher reported that soon after the October meetings she decided to try to use suggestions given at the workshop. What started as a simple activity to acquaint children with unfamiliar foods grew into a project that lasted many months and provided learning experiences in several areas, including language arts, science, numbers, and drawing. It also created opportunities to communicate the teachings of the school to both parents and other community members.

The original activity was a field trip to a local produce market so children could see, smell, and touch a variety of fruits and vegetables. The teacher was alert to note which, if any, foods were unfamiliar to many of the children. The trip was made in late October and the youngsters were entranced with the display of pumpkins. They all knew that pumpkins were used to make jack-o'-lanterns, but almost none of them knew that pumpkins were good to eat. A few children did mention pumpkin pie.

At a meeting with interested mothers, the teacher explained how her activity was planned to help children learn to eat a variety of foods. The mothers agreed to help and a plan was made. The children would learn about all the ingredients that went into pumpkin pie and then, with a few mothers and the teacher assisting, they would prepare a little pie which they could take home.

The project involved several tasting parties as the children became aware of the milk, eggs, and spices that are a part of a pumpkin pie. Many of the children saw, handled, and smelled whole nutmeg for the first time.

One mother, a waitress, was sure the pastry cook where she worked would prepare the dough for the children. He did this and divided it into individual portions so that each child could roll out the crust for his own pie. A classroom cooking kit was borrowed. When the big day arrived, the children helped prepare the filling, rolled out the pastry, placed it in a muffin tin, and added the filling. The pies were then baked and each child proudly took home a little pie about which he knew a great deal.

In the process of preparing the pumpkin filling, one child wanted to know if the class could do anything with the seeds. Another child remembered he had tasted pumpkin seeds. Half of the seeds were toasted with butter and salt, in the same way as peanuts are prepared. One child remarked that the melting butter smelled like milk. This led to a butter-making project at a later date.

The remainder of the pumpkin seeds were planted and the children learned that good soil, water, and light were needed to make plants grow. The teacher reported that the plants were now in bloom.

A report of this project was made at a school staff meeting. It contained a summary of the learning situations in several curriculum areas as well as the opportunities for communicating with parents and other community members. Thus other teachers were aware of the possibilities for further teaching of nutrition and of enriching other areas of learning.

Nutrition Handbook

The Nutrition Handbook for Teachers—a supplement to the Massachusetts Curriculum Guides—was a cooperative effort of staff members of the State Departments of

Education and Public Health which was revised in 1953. The supply of this publication is now exhausted. The nutritionists in the State Department of Health and the senior supervisor of elementary education agreed that a new revision is needed.

At the close of the October meetings, the senior supervisor of elementary education approached the chief nutritionist from the health department and suggested that a committee be formed to review and revise the Nutrition Handbook in terms of the needs and the concepts discussed at the workshop.

All of the committee members have full work schedules. Planning blocks of time to collaborate is difficult, but progress on the revision was described. School personnel were invited to discuss the proposed guide and to suggest areas where teachers need help.

Sources of Consultant Help

The nutrition specialist from the Massachusetts Extension Service reviewed some of the possible sources of consultant help in the community. There may be many individuals either working or living within the community who have background in nutrition and who could be of assistance on occasion.

They were listed as follows:

1. Dietitians
2. Home economics teachers
3. School lunch supervisors
4. College or university teachers
5. Homemakers (retired career women)
6. School nurses
7. Nutritionists (government or voluntary agencies)
8. Members of the following professional groups:
 - a. American Dietetics Association
 - b. American Public Health Association, Foods and Nutrition Section
 - c. American Home Economics Association
9. Physicians
10. Dentists
11. Extension county agent in home economics or 4-H Club work.

For these persons to make the greatest contribution to a school program and to avoid confusion, they would need to meet with educators to discuss the basic concepts, objectives, and procedures of the school nutrition education program.

Summary and Evaluation

The USDA nutritionist summed up the two-part workshop and commented on future objectives and possible group activities as follows:

- School and community groups met to consider how

best to help children establish eating habits which will enable them to function most effectively throughout life.

- The nutritional situation was considered, reports of the research that has pointed up some of the problems were cited, and possible techniques and procedures suitable for use in schools were discussed. Participants went back to their communities to test ideas in school situations.

- After 7 months many constructive activities were reported. One of the most significant outcomes of this co-operative effort will be the revision, now underway, of the nutrition education curriculum guide.

- The ultimate goal is not scattered activities in classrooms, however well conceived and conducted they may be; but rather ongoing programs that start in the kindergarten, continue throughout the school career, and project into the home and community.

- Programs of this nature start with teachers. Some way must be devised to help all teachers gain a common core of (1) sound, basic nutrition information, (2) approaches for encouraging good food habit formation, and (3) approaches for helping children develop wholesome attitudes toward foods. A well-conceived curriculum guide, properly interpreted, could provide this core for teachers in service and for prospective teachers in institutions of teacher education.

- Sources of consultant help in nutrition and food selection will be needed at least until teachers develop facility in conducting appropriate activities. Home economics teachers and school nurses with the help of some orientation and refresher work might, if time can be allocated, be excellent resources within the schools. Nutritionists in public and voluntary agencies, in industry-sponsored groups, and in other positions in the community might be available when special activities require their competencies.

- Some means of having new knowledge interpreted as it is established and of coordinating activities will also be needed. This may be accomplished in a variety of ways. It may be done by a nutrition educator in the State department of education, a school lunch supervisor, a home economics supervisor, or any person with an especially good background in nutrition. The responsibility might even be shared by nutritionists and educators from various agencies.

- The success of the program will not depend so much on the title of the person interpreting nutrition facts and coordinating programs as on her competence and on how well lines of communication are kept open and functioning among all the interested groups.

- An excellent start has been made by the workshop

participants in using school and community resources to insure the nutritional health of children.

- The knowledge and experience gained in this co-operative effort can serve as a guide to other school and community groups as progress is made toward coordinated programs.

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Agencies and Their Representatives 1961-62

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CHAIRMEN OF ACTIVE STATE NUTRITION COMMITTEES

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Colorado—Fern Bowman, Colorado State University, Fort Collins.

Connecticut—Jeannette W. Sturmer, State Welfare Department, State Office Building, Hartford 3.

Georgia—Charlotte B. Jackson, School of Nursing, Emory University, Atlanta 22.

Illinois, State—Margaret I. Morris, Director, Dairy Council of the Quad-Cities, 504 Rock Island Bank and Trust Building, Rock Island.

Illinois, Chicago (Chicago Nutrition Association)—Rita Campbell Weaver, Director, Department of Nutrition, National Livestock and Meat Board, 407 South Dearborn Street, Chicago 5.

Indiana—Dr. Helen E. Clark, Professor, School of Home Economics, Purdue University, Lafayette.

Kansas—Conie C. Foote, Director, Nutrition Section, Kansas State Board of Health, Topeka.

Maine—Avis Hughey, Department of Education, State House, Augusta.

Massachusetts (Subcommittee of the Central Health Council)—Emma Wetherbee May, Nutrition Supervisor, State Department of Health, 88 Broad Street, Boston 10.

Minnesota—Edna Olson, State Department of Public Welfare, Centennial Building, St. Paul 1.

Mississippi—Mary S. Harvey, District Nutritionist, Sunflower County Health Department, Ruleville.

New Hampshire—Dorothy Kingsbury, Head, Home Economics Department, Teachers College, Keene.

New Jersey—Asta Packard, 76 North Bridge Street, Somerville.

New Mexico—Mildred Latini, Executive Director, Dairy Council of Northern New Mexico, 302 San Mateo Boulevard, Northeast, Albuquerque.

New York, State—Marjorie Burns, New York State College of Home Economics, Cornell University, Ithaca.

New York (Food and Nutrition Council of Greater New York, Inc.)—Dr. Robert S. Goodhart, National Vitamin Foundation, 149 East 78th Street, New York 22. Margaret M. Connor, Chairman, Planning Board, 146 Central Park West, New York 23.

Ohio—Irene Netz, Extension Nutritionist, Ohio State University, Columbus 10.

Oklahoma—Dr. Helen Barbour, Assistant Dean of Home Economics, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater.

Rhode Island—Dorothy Bailey, Box 4, State Hospital, Howard.

South Carolina—Janie McDill, Extension Nutritionist, Clemson College, Clemson.

Texas—Rose Adair, 3714 Tam O'Shanter Drive, Mesquite.

Utah—Dr. Sadie O. Morris, College of Family Living, Brigham Young University, Provo.

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Virginia (Subcommittee of the Virginia Council of Health and Medical Care)—Mabel Todd, Director, Nutrition Services, Virginia Department of Health, Richmond 19.

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West Virginia—Marian B. Cornell, Director, Bureau of Nutrition, West Virginia Department of Health, Charleston 5.

Puerto Rico—Rose Marina Torres, Head, Nutrition Division, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico.

MATERIALS

Listing of these materials is for the information of readers and does not necessarily mean recommendation. Materials or information concerning them may be obtained from the address given.

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Growth Through Agricultural Progress

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Research Service
Institute of Home Economics
Washington 25, D. C.

Educating Homemakers in the Use of Donated Commodities

By Mary M. Hill, Ed. D. and Mary E. McKennan

When the donated food distribution program was expanded to make a greater variety and quantity of food immediately available to more than six million needy people, nutritionists, home economists, workers in related fields, and State and local nutrition committees were encouraged to initiate activities to help homemakers use these foods to best advantage. The job to be done involved public relations and community education as well as work directly with recipients.

To keep State and local workers informed of what others are doing, we asked our readers, in the March-June issue of NUTRITION COMMITTEE NEWS, to send us descriptions of activities they had used. The Agricultural Marketing Service staff made a similar request of State distribution agents and the Federal Extension Service personnel encouraged workers on the State and local levels to report their contributions to educational programs.

Many State and local groups found that cooperative efforts were most effective and reports from 42 States emphasize the willingness with which workers from State offices, cooperative extension services, city and county agencies, informative media, schools, and civic and community organizations have served.

From these reports we have summarized the approaches used and indicated strengths and limitations as reported by local workers.

Demonstrations

Since homemakers receiving commodities needed to know how to reconstitute the nonfat dry milk and dried eggs as well as to properly store and use the foods, demonstrations were given in practically every county distributing donated foods. In some localities recipients were even required to attend a demonstration before foods were issued to them.

Workers in many communities held "cooking school" type demonstrations for interested homemakers, particularly those in low-income groups, to show how the commodities--whether they were donated or purchased--could be used in the preparation of low-cost meals. Meetings were held at various places in the community--distribution centers, churches, schools, housing projects, and social service centers.

Demonstrations generally included careful instructions for reconstituting the dry milk and dried eggs, proper storage of all donated foods, and suggestions for preparing and including them in the family meals. Usually recipes for a variety of dishes using the commodities were distributed.

Reports indicate that effectiveness was increased when demonstrators showed how commodity foods could be used to prepare dishes familiar to the particular group; i.e., in regions where families enjoy biscuits, johnny-cake, and cornbread, demonstrators prepared these foods using the flour, lard, cornmeal, dry milk and dried eggs available to needy recipients. In other communities the preparation of cottage cheese, buttermilk, and yogurt from dry milk was well received. Demonstrators generally agree that the distribution of recipes has not necessarily been helpful, unless the recipes have been adapted to local eating patterns, methods of preparation, and available facilities.

In some localities recipients included non-English-speaking families unable to use written instructions that were provided. Special materials were translated into the appropriate language, or meetings were held with these groups to show them how to use the commodities to prepare familiar foods as well as other tasty dishes.

In other areas, pictorial directions for the reconstitution of milk and eggs were developed for recipients who could not read.

Although demonstration meetings open to all homemakers were often well attended, local distributing agents, home economists, and other workers in many areas were disappointed with the number of recipient homemakers attending the demonstrations.

Often the homemaker was not the family member who received the commodities at the distribution point, and therefore did not see the demonstration given there. Workers reported that needy homemakers might not have busfare or other means of transportation to meetings; others could not make provision for care of preschool children; and still others were reluctant to be identified as recipients. Some did not attend--apparently because they have been merely subsisting for so long a time that they simply do not have the energy, or do not understand the importance of putting forth this effort to help themselves.

The fact that all recipient homemakers were not reached with these demonstrations does not detract from their value. In addition to the large number of recipients who were reached and helped, many other homemakers in low-income groups also benefited.

Direct Consultations

It is impossible to estimate the number of families reached by home economists and other workers whose responsibilities take them into the homes of recipients. Home consultants report that they have visited one homemaker to offer help and suggestions in the use of donated commodities and found six or more neighbors waiting to share the instruction.

This method of reaching families who need help, although excellent, requires the services of many trained persons who understand how to store and use the commodities and who also know how to work with the particular group of recipients in each community.

Workshops and Training Sessions

Nutritionists and other workers throughout the country could not hope to attend to their major responsibilities and in addition, provide an adequate educational program for needy families--especially at such short notice. The President's Executive Order of late January called for immediate expansion of the food distribution program; by March, county distribution centers were ready to make foods available to more than six million persons.

Reports indicate that meetings were held all over the country to (1) acquaint local personnel, many of whom were volunteers, with the problems involved and (2) provide them with educational approaches and materials for helping recipient and other low-income families in the community to use commodities effectively. These sessions were conducted by nutritionists, home economics teachers, school lunch managers, extension workers, and the like.

Use of Mass Media of Communication

Mass media--particularly television--not only reach virtually all the people, but the fact that this medium is used lends status to the program. News releases, radio tapes for use on "Farm and Home" shows, films, and TV programs have been prepared.

In some communities demonstrations were presented on TV. These served both recipient homemakers and volunteer workers who would later demonstrate to small groups. Other communities worked essential information about commodity foods into existing TV shows. The fact that these shows had a continuing audience not only gave status to the program, but probably reached more viewers than a special presentation.

School Lunch and Classroom Activities

Classroom activities were necessarily limited because commodities such as the dried eggs are not available to all the children. However, many home economics teachers taught planning and preparation of low-cost meals. These lessons included dishes made with foods which are available on the retail market.

Since school lunch programs make use of the same commodities that are available to needy families, children in these families have opportunities in school to taste unfamiliar foods and thus learn to accept them. Many school lunch managers prepared and distributed family-size recipes for dishes made with the commodities and which are served in the school lunch.

Coordinating Activities

Nutrition committees in several States have contributed significantly in this area. They have assumed responsibility for calling key people together to (1) organize activities on a State or countywide basis, (2) adapt materials for use in particular communities or with groups presenting

special problems, (3) teach local leaders to work with recipient and other low-income families, and (4) coordinate the activities of various agencies and groups concerned.

The efforts of these groups have proven effective in initiating educational programs simultaneously with the start of the expanded distribution program, in preventing duplication of services, and in providing consistent information to families.

In Conclusion

All reports suggest that making donated commodities available to families does not insure improved diets unless recipient families include the foods regularly in their daily menus. To accomplish this, homemakers must know how to store and to use the foods received and family members must learn to accept foods unfamiliar to them or not previously included in their diets.

Local workers seem to be faced with two persistent problems--(1) how to reach all the people who could benefit from such a program and (2) how to develop educational activities consistent with local needs and resources. No one approach to these problems has been reported completely successful. The best solution seems to be to use all approaches appropriate to the local situation.

Educational programs require time and effort on the part of busy community workers. They also require funds. However, workers report that such programs need not be directed exclusively to needy families. In fact, broader programs were reported more effective in reaching and helping recipient homemakers and their families.

By having demonstrations open to all interested homemakers, recipients could attend without identifying themselves as "needy." The home economics teachers often reached the older children in recipient families with instruction on planning and preparing low-cost meals using the commodities that are available on the retail market. In many instances these youngsters were responsible for meal preparation at home because their mothers worked outside the home.

On the other hand, any homemaker who does not already know can benefit from learning to prepare nutritionally sound meals for her family. Homemakers in low-income groups can spend their food money to best advantage by including in their purchases the low-cost foods available to them. The use of these foods by the more affluent homemaker will add variety to her menus.

These educational activities were initiated to meet a crisis situation--to help needy homemakers learn to use foods that may be packaged or processed differently from similar products in grocery stores or that may be an entirely new product. After several months of trial, educational programs have proven to have a potential for benefiting the entire community which seems to make the effort and any costs incurred worthwhile.